



# SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PORT PHILLIP CITY COUNCIL

## MINUTES

29 APRIL 2026



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# MINUTES - SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PORT PHILLIP CITY COUNCIL - 29 APRIL 2026



## MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PORT PHILLIP CITY COUNCIL HELD 29 APRIL 2026 IN ST KILDA TOWN HALL AND VIRTUAL VIA TEAMS

The meeting opened at 6:30pm.

### IN ATTENDANCE

Cr Makin (Chairperson), Cr Buckingham, Cr Crawford, Cr Cunsolo, Cr Halliday, Cr Hardy, Cr Jay, Cr Mears, Cr Thomann.

Brian Tee, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Kylie Bennetts, General Manager Community Wellbeing, Robyn Borley, General Manager, Governance and Performance, Peter Benazic, General Manager, City Infrastructure, Daniel Lew, Director, People and Experience, Peter Liu, Chief Financial Officer, James Gullan, Acting Manager Communications and Governance, Emily Williams, Senior Council Business Advisor.

*The Council respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge their legacy and spiritual connection to the land and waterways across the City of Port Phillip and pay our heartfelt respect to their Elders, past, present, and emerging.*

### 1. APOLOGIES

Nil.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

*Mayor Makin noted that Chris Carroll, Chief Executive Officer was unable to attend the meeting due to personal leave, Brian Tee assumed the role of CEO for the meeting.*

### 3. A TRUSTED AND HIGH-PERFORMING ORGANISATION

#### 3.1 Proposed Plan for Port Phillip 2025-35 (Year Two) including Budget 2026-27: Release for Public Consultation

#### PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider the release of the Plan for Port Phillip 2025-35 updated for Year 2 and the Proposed Budget 2026/27 for public consultation.

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The following questions were taken on notice during discussion of the item:

**Councillor Hardy:** In relation to the proposed Plan for Port Phillip, I see there is some consideration for change to our waste services in the future. When do you think these proposed changes will come to Council?

*Peter Benazic, General Manager City Infrastructure took the question on notice.*

**Councillor Thomann:** Can you tell me where the St Kilda Pier Landside projections are in the document? I think there is \$2.5m in 2 or 3 years' time for the Pier project, when the project is supposed to be finished next year. Can officers advise why is significant funding allocated in 2027/28 and 2028/29 when the project is expected to be completed next year

*Peter Liu, Chief Financial Officer took the question on notice.*

## **Moved Crs Makin/Halliday**

That Council:

- 3.1 Endorses the Plan for Port Phillip (including Budget) 2025-35 updated for Year 2, inclusive of the Community Vision, Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan, Asset Plan, Proposed (10-year) Financial Plan, Proposed Revenue and Rating Plan, and the Proposed Budget 2026/27, amended to reflect any changes made through resolutions at this meeting, to be released for community engagement (Attachment 1).
- 3.2 Receives and hears feedback arising from the community engagement process at the Council Meeting to be held on 20 May 2026, commencing 6.30pm at the St Kilda Town Hall, prior to considering adoption of the draft Plan for Port Phillip (including Budget) 2025-35 (Year 2), at the Special Council Meeting to be held on 24 June 2026 commencing 6.30pm at the St Kilda Town Hall.
- 3.3 Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to make amendments to the Proposed Plan for Port Phillip (including Budget) 2025-35 (Year 2) (Attachment 1) to reflect any changes through resolutions at this meeting, and to make minor editorial adjustments and corrections to the document to prepare for publication and distribution.
- 3.4 Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:
  - 3.4.1 continue to provide Council projects and services within the parameters of the adopted Plan for Port Phillip (including Budget) 2025-35 (Year 2) and any decisions of Council that have updated this; and
  - 3.4.2 incur planning, design and community consultation expenditure on new projects in the Proposed Budget 2026/27.
- 3.5 Notes that the proposed budget includes an increase of 2.75 per cent to the average general rate, which aligns with Victorian Government's rates cap and is significantly lower than forecast inflation of 4.9 per cent for June 2025 to June 2026, which applies to a large portion of Council's contractual cost increases.
- 3.6 Notes that the Proposed Budget 2026/27 includes the following changes to general rates and waste charges:

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- 3.6.1 General rates continuing to be raised by application of differential rates under section 161 of the Local Government Act 1989 for Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Derelict, Vacant, and Unactivated retail land.
- 3.6.2 Updated definition and characteristics of Vacant Land for the purpose of differential rating to encourage timely development:
- a) Vacant land is any land:
    - Which is not derelict land; and
    - On which there is no building that is lawfully occupied or lawfully adapted for occupation
  - b) For the purposes of this definition:
    - Land is not Vacant Land unless:
      - The land has been without any building for the period of 24 months prior to the declaration of rates for the relevant financial year; or
      - The land was classified as derelict land in the 24 months prior to the declaration of rates for the relevant financial year; and
    - Land will no longer be considered Vacant Land in the financial year after approval at frame stage has been provided in accordance with Building Permit issued for the development of the site (under the Building Act 1993) provided that the building permit has not expired.
- 3.6.3 A 12-month transition period applies to the Vacant Land definition and characteristics which aims to transition derelict properties following demolition from derelict differential rates to vacant land differential rates to encourage their timely development.
- 3.6.4 Introduces a rebate to vacant land differential rates from 2026/27 for eligible properties that meet activation requirements.
- 3.6.5 With consideration of the preliminary 2026 revaluation and consistent with our Rating Strategy, a 2.0 per cent rates reallocation to commercial properties, to maintain fairness and consistency in the distribution of rates. Noting average commercial rates increase will be lower than the rates cap for the past two years.
- 3.6.6 Minor changes to differential rates in the dollar may be required once the final 2026 revaluation is confirmed.
- 3.6.7 The recovery of \$1.85 million expenditure for dumped rubbish and litter bin collection services via the Default Waste Charge, offset by an equivalent reduction in General Rates revenue. This is a revenue-neutral outcome and compliant with the Minister's Good Practice Guidelines on Local Government Service Rates and Charges released in 2026.
- 3.6.8 An increase in the Default Waste Charge of 20.7 per cent, from \$230.30 to \$278.00 due to:
- 3.6.8.1 10.9 per cent relates to the inclusion of dumped rubbish and litter bin collection cost recovery previously funded from general rates (see 7.5.9)
  - 3.6.8.2 a new kerbside collection contract following tender

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- 3.6.8.3 and State Government Landfill Levy increases.
- 3.6.9 An increase to the Private Waste Collection Rebate from \$89.00 to \$101.00 to reflect the higher waste charge and a more equitable rebate based on service access and use.
- 3.7 Notes the Proposed Budget 2026/27 has been informed by early community engagement between November 2025 to February 2026.
- 3.8 Notes the Proposed Budget 2026/27 has been prepared in a highly uncertain operating environment, with global conflict contributing to inflationary pressures and service disruptions affecting Council and the community.
- 3.9 Notes the Proposed Budget 2026/27 is fiscally responsible, based on prudent financial management principles. Council will closely monitor conditions and, if required, adjust financial levers should risks materialise.
- 3.10 Notes that updates will be provided regularly, through the Quarterly Financial Review and the Monthly CEO Report.
- 3.11 Notes that the Proposed Budget 2026/27 includes:
  - 3.11.1 An additional \$1.22 million for inflation provisions, including flow through impact to contracts, based on latest inflation forecasts provided by a reputable economic advisor,
  - 3.11.2 Fees and charges generally increasing by 3.00 per cent unless it makes sense to vary, and to provide support to those who need it most.
  - 3.11.3 Ongoing commitment to efficiency savings of \$2.4 million, \$1.9 million achieved and included in the base, and a commitment to look for \$0.5 million during the financial year.
  - 3.11.4 No debt, aside from some finance lease liabilities will remain as part of our financing strategy.
  - 3.11.5 Project portfolio investment of \$120.5 million to maintain, grow and improve services and assets.
  - 3.11.6 Intention to lease four properties as required by section 115 of the Act as outlined in this report.
- 3.12 Continues targeted support to community members where most needed through:
  - 3.12.1 A Council-funded pensioner rates rebate up to \$242 (a \$12 increase or 5.2% on 2025/26), or a maximum of 50 per cent when combined with the Victorian Government rebate, whichever is the lower amount. Noting that the City of Port Phillip is one of the few councils that offer this scheme in addition to the State Government rebate.
  - 3.12.2 One-off rate waivers up to a maximum of \$800 (a \$50 or 6.6% increase on 2025/26), or 50 per cent of the general rates and charges imposed on rateable land, whichever is less, for cases of extreme financial hardship, subject to application and approval by the Chief Financial Officer.
  - 3.12.3 Self-funded retiree can opt for permanent deferment of rates at a discounted interest rate – currently 5 per cent interest (50% of legislative penalty interest rate). This relieves the cashflow pressures for payment of rates to this community cohort until the property is sold and or transferred.

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3.12.4 Temporary payment plans at no interest charge are available to ratepayers with cashflow challenges, subject to application and approval.

3.13 Notes that the Proposed Budget 2026/27 results in a cumulative cash surplus of \$0.85 million providing additional contingency for organisational financial risks.

**A vote was taken and the MOTION was CARRIED.**

**FOR: Crs Makin, Thomann, Crawford, Buckingham, Halliday, Hardy and Cunsolo**

**AGAINST: Crs Jay and Mears**

As there was no further business the meeting closed at 7.17pm.

Confirmed: 6 May 2026

Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_